

# **Four Courageous Conversations**

## **Conversations About Racism and Violence in America**

### **Participant Worksheet**

*“The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the people of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ. Indeed, nothing genuinely human fails to raise an echo in their hearts.”*

Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, Vatican, Dec. 7, 1965

We are here together to face the recent and longstanding racism and violence against black and brown people in America. You are welcome here. Whatever your thoughts and feelings, they are welcome here too. This conversation invites you to reflect and articulate your thoughts and feelings, and to hear those of one another without judgment. We aren't here to solve or resolve anything. We are here to reflect, listen, speak, and pray and be in this moment together with courage, to make progress to end the evil of racism. We are here to face it together as Jesus prayed, “so that they may all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I in you...” (Jn. 17:21)

#### **Participant Ground Rules**

1. **Be Here Now** – Give full attention to each other as you pay attention to the movements of your heart and listen for the Spirit of God.
2. **Listen for Understanding** – Take to heart what's expressed by others, and thoughtfully consider and express what you want to say.
3. **One at a Time** – One person speaks and everyone else gives the gift of listening without judgment.
4. **Everyone Speaks Once before Anyone Speaks Again** – If you wish, you may choose to pass with the opportunity to speak later.
5. **Speak Your Truth and Let Others Speak Theirs** – Say “I am, I feel, I think, I need to, etc.” instead of “They are, they think, they feel, they need to, etc.” There will be no discussion, feedback, or comments after each person speaks. There will be moments of silence in the conversation for people to digest what has been expressed and how it relates to their own thoughts and feelings.

#### **Facilitator & Recorder Roles**

The role of our facilitators is to assist in opening up and guiding the conversations. Kindly follow their instructions. Notes will be taken so there's a record of these important conversations. The notes will be anonymous. The content will be recorded, not who said it. The notes will be shared with you and with the other participants in your Courageous Conversation.

## **Four Courageous Conversations** **Responding to Racism and Violence in America**

### **+ Conversation #1 a: *Sharing Our Hearts***

What are your feelings re the racism and violence that is happening in our country?

The sharing of responses by all group members will be followed by three minutes of silence for each person to reflect on what they heard from others and how it affected their own thoughts and feelings. Then each person will then be invited to briefly respond to the sentence stem,

### **+ Conversation #1 b: *Sharing Our Hearts***

*“As I listened, what I heard was...”*

Responses to the question and to the sentence stem will be recorded anonymously.

### **+ Courageous Conversation #2: *On Roots and Causes***

How has white privilege and other factors affected your understanding and experience regarding the root causes of racism and violence in America?

Responses will be recorded anonymously.

### **+ Courageous Conversation #3: *Speaking Our Truth***

What are the two or three most important things that you want others, including leaders at every level (any level – you may name the roles or levels if you wish) to be aware of as we consider how to respond to racism and violence in America?

Responses will be recorded anonymously.

### **+ Courageous Conversation #4: *What now? What next?***

“All of this says to me that I need to ...”

Responses will be recorded anonymously.

**+ Gratitude Conversation:** *“I am grateful that I was here in this conversation because...”* and/or *“One gift I received in this conversation is...”*

Responses will be recorded anonymously.

**“I give you a new commandment: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” John 13: 34 - 35**